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KŪṬIYĀṬṬAM - A HISTORICAL STUDY

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KŪṬIYĀṬṬAM - A historical study

— K. G. PAULOSE

Kūṭiyāṭṭam is the unique traditional Sanskrit theatre of Kerala. Being the only surviving relic of the ancient Indian theatricas experiments, it has attracted the attention of eminent scholars from far and near. Thanks to their untiring efforts a lot of valuable information on the various aspects of the art - form is available to us today. Veteran actors themselves have recorded their experiences and contributed authoritative texts.¹

The attempt, in this paper therefore, is to view it from a different angle; to trace the developments of over a thousand years—the transformation of nāṭaka into āṭṭam and kūttu, the socio- religious-economic factors that contributed to this evolutionary process and the causes for its decline. The materials used are the original source drawn from unpublished documents - the stage manuals of cākyārs.² Also interaction with performing artists and kūṭiyāṭṭam - scholars helped in finding out solutions for several problems.

I 1. Kūṭiyāṭṭam is a compound of two words - Kūṭi - combined and āṭṭam - acting. It is combined acting because.³ —

1. Both the cākyār and Naññyār appear for acting.
2. More characters than one are presented on the stage.
3. There is a mixture of narration and acting.
4. All the four types of acting are combined in it.

Prof. K. R. Pisaroti has included this among the semi - religious type along with Sanghakkali and Kṛṣṇāṭṭam. Kūttu and Kūṭiyattam are closely related.

I 2. The following verse enumerates the main constituents of Kūṭiyāṭṭam ⁴

- | | | |
|--------------|---------|--|
| 1. Rasa | — eight | Sṛṅgāra, Karuṇa. Hāsyā, Vīra, Raudra, Bībhatsa, Adbhuta and Bhayānaka. |
| 2. Dharmī | — two | Lokadharmī and Nāṭyadharmī |
| 3. Siddhi | — two | Daivī and Pauruṣī |
| 4. Songs | — five | Prāsādika, Akṣeḷika, Prāveśika, Uttara and Naiṣkrāmikā. |
| 5. Orchestra | — four | Ghanam, Suṣīram, Anavadham, Tatam. |
| 6. Stage | — | Vikṛṣṭam, Caturaśram, and Traśryam. |

I 3. The cākyār is the traditional actor of Kūṭiyāṭṭam. ⁵ The word is formed from slāghyavākkukār ⁶ or slāghyagīr ⁷ giving stress to all the six qualities for good speech in them. Some derive it from sāksī and yet others from śākyan. ⁸

Cākyār is a class who have preserved acting as their family duty and acquired for themselves an important position in the cultural history of this state. Tradition holds that there were 18 cākyār families of which 14 have been identified. The greatest of the actors now living, Mādhava Cākyar, belongs to the Ammannūr family.

I 4. According to an oral tradition many dramas have been popular on the stage, the total number of acts prepared for the stage being seventy two. But some of them are not in use now. A list is given below :

1. Srikrṣṇacarita
2. Unmādavāsavadatta
3. Śākuntala

These three are traditionally reported to be popular. We have no evidence. A reference in Nāṭyaśāstra indicates that Śākuntala was not used by cākyārs.⁹

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Dūtavakya | 2. Karnaabhāra | 3. Ūrubhaṅga |
| 4. Pañcarātra | 5. Avimāraka | 6. Mahānāṭaka |
| 7. Pratiñjāyagandharāyaṇa | 8. Bālacarita | 9. Cārudatta. |

These nine were once popular; but now not used by cākyārs.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Subadrādhanañjaya | 2. Tapatīsamavarāṇa |
| 3. Nāgānanda | 4. Pratimā |
| 5. Mattavilāsa | 6. Kalyāṇasaugandhika |
| 7. Madhayamavāyoga | 8. Bhagavadajjukam |
| 9. Abhiṣeka | 10. Svapnavāsavadatta |
| 11. Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi ¹⁰ | |

These are the plays which are still popular among the cākyārs. Of these Bhagavadajjuka and Mattavilāsa are prhasanās. Svapnavāsavadattam was not used for a long time. Recently it was presented on the stage at the initiative of Late Sri Māṇi Mādhava Cākyār. Bālivadhāṅka of Abhiṣeka is presented by Ammannūr Mādhava cākyār. Āṭṭakathā of it is published in English.¹¹ Mārgi, Thiruvananthapuram has weekly performances of Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Early beginnings BC 2c. — AD 8c

II 1 i. The ancient theatre of Bharata had its varied manifestations in different parts of India. The mārgi — deśi relation i.e., the broader relations between mārgi and deśi on the one hand and inter-relations between the deśis themselves, is the most interesting feature of the cultural history of India.¹²

Nāṭyaśāstra had its influence in the south from very early period¹³ Bharata himself refers to the Andhras, Dramilas and inhabitants of the south.¹⁴ The ancient theatre in all probability might have been an amalgum of the present-day play, opera, and ballet. The artist had to speak, sing and dance

In the 28th gatha of Cilapatikāram, there is a reference to Parayūr Kūttaccākkian. He had an unusual talent to present the turbulent tāṇḍava by his right part and the sober lāsya by left part simultaneously, thereby playing the dance of Ardhanārīśwara. We do not know whether it formed a part of dramatic presentation or a pure dance. The pallavas of Kāñci maintained a high degree of perfection in their theatrical performances, as evidenced in Mattavilāsa. Music played a vital role in their tradition.¹⁵

II 1-ii. Mayūra 7th c. A. D beautifully compares the sunrise to the opening of a play¹⁶ —

“Oa the mountain - platform the sun's charioteer like a sūtradhāra, his beauty being revealed when the night curtain has been removed, offers the puṣpāñjali of stars announcing the māhānātaka of the sun's course around the world”.

In an unusually charming way, this description gives us a glimpses as to how a drama was introduced in the 7th century.

Verses 880 - 928 of Kuṭṭunīmata of Damodaragupta contains a graphic description of the enactment of the first act of Ratnāvalī. Verse 922 reproduces the Ratnāvalīśloka. According to the brief account available to us the verse was represented giving an expanded meaning along with the original¹⁷. The actor thrice repeats the line to facilitate the fuller comprehension of the meaning. Languages other than Sanskrit also were in use.¹⁸ The entry and exit in the benedictory scene were accompanied by Dhruvā songs. All roles were played by women.

The claim of the author that this method excelled the traditional one handed down by Bharata need not be dismissed as an exaggeration since the thousand years that have preceded Bharata might have brought remarkable improvement on the techniques of Nāṭya śāstra.

All are not unanims on their opinion as to whether Ratnāvalī tradition of Kashmir had crossed the Vidhyans.

The Kerala actors were familiar with Kuṭṭanīmatam. We can take the Ratnavali tradition as the proto - type of the later developments in the south.

II 2-i FORMATIVE PERIOD [9 c-AD - 11 c-AD]

The Sanskrit language by this time acquired strong hold over all walks of life. Śrīśaṅkara and Śaktibhadra used it as the vehicle of their philosophical and aesthetic activities.

Kalyāṇasaugagamdikavyāyoga belongs to this period. It refers to Mattavilāsa as popular on the stage²⁰—

Ullūr states that there are evidences to show that Kulasekhara included this among the dramas for Kūṭiyāṭṭam stage. The 'evidences' are not however revealed. 15th century Naṭāṅkuśa refers to this play.

Fortunately for us we have some details of this period. King Kulaśekhara wrote two sanskrit dramas — subhadrādhanañjayam and Tapatīsaṁvaraṇam. He got the stage manuals prepared for them by a Brahmin scholar. The King himself acted the different roles before it was presented by actors on the stage.

The composition of Samvaraṇadhvani and Dhanañjayadhvani marks an important epoch in the history of Kerala stage. In order to appreciate the full significance of the contribution of Kulaśekhara we will have a closer look on these two works.

There were two types of spectators — the prekṣaka and nānāloka. The former group had a thorough mastery over all the eighteen śāstras²¹. Normally they occupied the first row in front of the actors²²— सरसहृदयैर्भूसुरैर्भासिताग्रे ।

The nānāloka comprised of ordinary connoisseurs, perhaps drawn from the antarāḷajātis and śūdras. The presentation has to be in two ways — One to satisfy the prekṣaka and the other to please the general audience²³. The prekṣaka will be satisfied only by antarabhinaya — ocular gestures

(movement of eye lids, eye - brows and the pupils). The nānāloka will not be able to appreciate such subtle and specialised mode of netrābhinaya. For them Kulaśekhara prescribed the four - fold sāmānyābhinaya. The object to be communicated is also twofold — mental condition to the Prekṣaka and gradual unfolding of the plot to the ordinary spectators.

II-2-ii This distinction can be illustrated with an example from the I Act of the drama. Vidūṣaka and Samvaraṇa entered the garden. There they saw the foot - prints of a damsel impressed on a stone. The King exclaims :—

“Oh ! here lies this emerald stone hit in heart by the foot print - arrows of cupid”²⁴

The representation of the meaning of this verse on the stage according to Kulasekhara is this :—

To nānāloka — through sāmānyābhinaya

Recites the verse in Sanskrit, repeats to make the expression clear. Communicates the primary meaning through Sāmānyābhinaya.

To Prekṣaka — through netrābhinaya.

One seeing this lotus - like foot - prints, I am hit by the arrows of cupid. Of his five arrows, lotus stands first. Among the ten love - lorn conditions sweetness to the eye is the foremost. Hit with the first arrow, I am under the grip of the first stage — enjoyment through the eyes.

The object described is the impression of foot - prints on the stone. The impression in his heart is rati, begining with nayanaprīti. This the King has to conceal from the public, hence he shares it only with the Prekṣakas through subtle eye gesture. This Prekṣaka — prayokṭṛsambandha is different from the nānājana—prayokṭṛsambandha.²⁵ Realisation of these two planes of aesthetic enjoyment is the main thrust of Kulaśekhara's scheme of stage presentation. We can reconstruct the 'stage—play' of the opening scene of Tapatisamvaraṇa as Kulasekhara presented it on the stage.

II-2-iii The play begins in a morning. Parāśara, the jester, enters. He is hurt by a fall from the horse. As instructed by the King, he persuaded the queen to desist from her penance to beget a son. King Samvarana enters. He is worried over a dream he had in which the sun-God informed him that his wife will ever remain barren. He shares the details of the dream with his friend. He sees in it a new idea—the King should marry another. King objects to this since he is deeply attached to his wife. The King accompanied by Vidūṣaka starts to meet the queen. On the way, they reached a garden where they see the foot-prints of a damsel. Suddenly an ear ornament fell from the sky bearing the initial letters of a love-song. The King is visibly moved. The queen overhears their conversation; gets angry. The king retires to console her.

THE STAGE PLAY

(Vidūṣaka enters - pretends pain all over the body — produces sounds of anguish)

To the Prekṣaka - Antarabhinaya
Pūrvasambandha

The King sent word for me. On his orders, I asked the queen to stop her penance. I am asked to report before the King to hear the details of a dream he had during last night-

(Pūrvasambandha over)

What the dream will be?

(Pause - eyes fixed on the lamp - eyes raised - cheer in his face)

Oh! I got the meaning. The King is disgusted with his wife

To Nanaloka — Sāmānyabhinaya

Recites the textual passage, first in Prakṛt then in Sanskrit. The King has sent word for me through the Kañcukin that I should meet him to hear his dream. On the way I am hurt by the fall from the horse.....

Where will I meet the king Oh ! here he comes.

To Preksaka — Antarabhinaya

I know that the king is distressed due to the indifference to the queen. But I will pretend that the reason for his sorrow is the absence of a son-Putraśoka and not patnīvairāgya. The dream is false.

Exit

(The King enters behind the curtain — curtain removed)

To Prekṣaka — Antarabhinaya**Pūrvasambandha**

This morning I had a dream. I have sent word to the Vidusaka. I am not interested in the queen any longer. But I have to conceal it from my attendants.

Pūrvansambandha over.

(Eyes on the lamp — raises the eyes)

Should I reveal the dream to my friend or conceal it from him? Both do harm - if revealed he will understand the real situation ie. my growing disinterest to the queen; if not revealed he will misunderstand me. Ah! Let me read his mind, then gradually reveal everything to him.

To Nānāloka — Samanyabhinaya

(looks around, sees servants — recites the textual passage)

Oh! the greatness of the treasure known as son! The very thought that my wife is unable to bring an offspring worries me so much. Then, how deep will be the pain of fathers when they are separated from their children!

To Prekṣaka — Antarabhinaya

Ah! the misfortune of a man in having a wife whom he cannot love! When I remember that my queen is not endowed with the ability to deliver a child, there erupts in my heart an irresistible dislike for her.

I should make others believe that the reason of my grief is the absence of a child and not disinterest in the queen.

(Sees Parāśara)

Ah ! friend Parasara, what is this ?

The ordinary meaning of this verse is putraśoka. What is conveyed to the Preksaka is svapatnīvairāgya.

From here till they come across the foot - prints, both the King and Vidūṣaka conceal from each other their mental dispositions; reveal the same to Prekṣaka through eye-gestures. Every character at the time of his first entry narrates the incidents till then. This is Pūrvasambandha. It is an extension of Viṣkambha / Praveśaka accepted as Arthopakṣepaka. The only difference is that Viṣkambha relates to the whole story; pūrvasambandha only to the respective character. This narration is more developed in the introduction of vidūṣaka and Arjuna in subhadrādhanañjayam.

II-2-iv A particular stage in the development of plot is known as sandhi. It consists of two elements Arthaprakṛti and Avasthā. The former, being the sequence of incidents, is more related to the unfolding of the theme and the latter to the delineation of mental condition of the character contributing for the development of plot. The sāmānyābhinaya for Nānāloka stands close to arthaprakṛti and netrābhinaya for Prekṣaka to the avastha. Antarabhinaya here is the medium for the actor to share his inner-most emotions with the Prekṣaka. Kulasekhara took the clue from janāntikam where we have already a technique to peep close into the heart of the character.

II-2-v. The development of theatre in Kulasekhara is from the sthūla to Sūkṣma

Sthūla for Nānāloka

Sāmānyābhinaya

Viṣkambhaka

ArthaPrakṛti

Bahyārtha

Sūkṣma — for Prekṣaka

... Antarabhinaya

... Pūrvasambandha

... Avasthā

... Bhāva

II-2-vi Now let us sum up the contribution of Kulasekhara to the Kerala stage as its 'reviver and reformer.'

1. Recognition of two levels of aesthetic enjoyment as represented by Nānāloka and prekṣaka and the corresponding levels of acting.

2. Introducing every character with a brief narration of his antecedents — pūrvasambandha.
3. Delineation of two meanings - thematic and phychic, the former expressive and the latter suggestive.
4. Deviation from the script. This is hinted in Ratnāvali, but there it is only an extension of meaning, not a mental condition.

Kulaśekhara was a serious dramatist. He took the play to the hearts of the elite and erudite at the same time provided pleasurable relief to the ordinary spectators.

Compared to the Pallava stage, the theatre of Cera's presents a high order of perfection.

Period of Transition — 12c AD — 14c. AD

- II-3-i What Kulasekhara wrote was Nāṭaka. The 14th century Uṇṇinīlisandeśa refers to it as Kūttu²⁶. Tradition of nāṭaka is tra ed back to Nāṭyaśāstra, that of Kūttu to Tolkāpiyam. Both were parallel streams. When and how Nāṭaka was transformed to Kūttu? How did Nāṭyaprayoga become Kūti-yāṭṭam? To get an answer to this vexing problem we should relate it to the social, political and cultural history of Kerala.
- II-3-ii Historical period in the South began by 3rd century B. C, the Sangham age²⁷. Then Kerala formed an integral part of Tamiḷakam. The first wave of settlements of Brahmin here goes back to this age. The second wave, more powerful was during the Cālūkyā period - 7th and 8th century A. D. with the emergence of Cera empire these settlements came to acquire greater importance. A significant development of this period was the emergence of Temples in the place of Kāvu - tribal shrines — A new form of āgamic worship under the guidance of Brahmin priests came into force, relegating the Vedic ritualistic tradition to the background.

These temples were not only the centres of worship but also of art, culture and everything related to the social life including land and property. When temples grew in size the importance

and the number of functionaries increased. This gave birth to a new sub caste - Ampalavāsi. The Brahmins entered into alliance with them as also with Śūdras. They prevailed upon the ruling class also by conferring on them the status of Kṣatriya. The Nambūdiris thus formed a 'grand alliance' between themselves and ruling class on the one hand and between themselves and the lower castes on the other. The tenants had already come under their control.

The impact of this grand alliance was tremendous: It brought out basic changes in the social fabric of the land. There was a progressive secularisation of the Nambūdiri community. Most of them concentrated primarily on worldly affairs. Only a small fraction continued Vedic studies²⁸ Even the post of priest was offered to the immigrant Brahmins-*emprān*. Simultaneously, the indogenous groups were progressively Aryanised resulting in the imposition of a priestly Brahmin authority on a secular society. Consequently a large number of temple servants belonging to the Vāriar, Potuvāl, Piṣarōti, Cākyār and Nambiar sub - castes acquired proficiency in Sanskrit language and literature.

Attached to the temple, there were śālai and theatre the former to cater the need of education, the latter for singing dancing, acting and story telling. Bhaṭṭās were appointed in temples to recite regularly stories from Mahābhārata. This atmosphere dominating the social arena of this age enhanced the demand for and prestige of Devadāsis, Cākyārs and Bhaṭṭās; seperate institutions evolved around each of them.

II-3-iii The impact of all these on the theatre was:—

- i) There emerged a harmonious blend of the national and regional traditions.
- ii) Local language rose into prominence.
- iii) Sanskritisation of lower castes caused to increase the number of Nanaloka.

The decline of the centralised authority of the Ceras and the breakdown of the unity provided by Sanskrit in the national scene hastened the process of amalgamation. The 12th and 13th centuries witnessed the realisation of this transformation. The improvement on theatre during this transitory period was:

1. Introduction of local language
2. Development of inner meaning
3. Added importance of Vidūṣaka.
4. Restructuring of Sanskrit dramas
5. Temple theatres

Introduction of Local Language

II-3-iv Malayāḷam was more under the influence of Tamil during this period, the maṇipravāḷa was not yet fully developed. The language used in the translation of Dūtavākyaṃ can be taken to represent this period. It is not simply a translation of the original, but an elaboration with introduction to each character and explanation to the puranic allusion. The Nampiar Tamil emerged during this time.²⁹ Līlātilakam has certified the chastity of this pre-manipravalam language.³⁰

After a thorough investigation of the peculiarities of language used in Nampyār—Tamil Ullūr has assigned 13th century as the period of its emergence. This was the first instance of using local dialect on the Kerala stage. It was the Nampyār and not the cākyar, as commonly believed, who introduced Malayāḷam to our stage. During this period Nampyār appeared in almost all dramas to introduce them in the local language. At a later stage, vidūṣaka also came to use local language. His prominence pushed the Nampyār back and he had to contend with those dramas which do not have Vidūṣaka.

Development of Inner Meaning

II-3-v At the time of Kulasekhara the inner meaning conveyed through eye-gesture was essentially a mental condition-bhāva. Here it is extended to ideas and was communicated through

mudras. Mantrāṅka, the third act of Pratiñjāyugandharāyaṇa exemplifies this change.

Udayana was captivated by Mahāsenā. His three ministers disguised as a Buddhist, Brahmin and Lunatic discuss methods to release him from jail. In order to conceal their identity they use a kind of 'code language' while speaking; the real meaning is expressed through hand gestures. Example

Vasantaka — आगते चन्द्रे समागतानि सर्वनक्षत्राणि ।

On the rise of the moon, all the stars	
appear	Outer meaning
when Yaugandharāyaṇa, the chief came	
all his ministers followed	Inner meaning

Rumanvān — मोदक प्रेक्षे तावन् ।

Let me see the bread	Outer meaning
I too will join you	Inner meaning

Yaugandharāyaṇa — पश्यतु पश्यतु श्रमणभगवान् ।

See See revered Buddhist	Outer meaning
Dear Rumanvān, Please join us	Inner meaning

Here words stand for outer meaning, mudras convey inner meaning. The inner meaning here forms an integral part of the plot without which the audience cannot follow the development of the story. In Kulasekhara, the bhāva was only for higher enjoyment. In other words, the inner meaning here is vācya — expressed, whereas in Kulasekhara it was vyangya — suggested.

Role of Vidūṣaka

II-3-vi Introduction of Malayalam gave a greater role to vidūṣaka since he was the only character who can use vernacular and can interact with the masses. He thus attracted more people to theatre.

Sanskrit theatre always permitted the use of local dialects on the stage. Prākṛts were used in the Northern plays, as

they were the local language there. Abhinavagupta says that *miśrasaṃskṛta* in south is known as *maṇipravāḷa*.³¹ So there is nothing unusual in the hero using Sanskrit and the jester Malayālam. The paradox is that the *Vidūṣakā*, along with the local dialect uses *prākṛt* which for all practical purposes is an unnecessary appendage - 'ajāgaḷastana' on the stage now. At the same time, it serves as a strong clue to the nature of evolution of Sanskrit theatre. There did not take place any thoughtful reconstruction, instead the original structure was kept intact, new elements were piled up one on the other, till the penultimate point of its virtual disappearance.

Restructuring of Sanskrit Plays

II-3-vii This period is important from another point of view. Several Sanskrit plays modelled on the version of the two Kulasekhara dramas came to be used on the stage. Consequently the actors reconstructed the original texts of Sanskrit dramas and also prepared the stage manuals - *Kriyāvidhi*, to regulate their performance.

This had a two fold effect - uniformity of the prologue and abridgement of the original script.

When Nampiar assumed the role of *sūcanāsūtradhāra* (*viśiṣṭa-kathāśeṣasūcakapraṇavānīvilāsaḥ*)³² and intervened to introduce the play in the local language the stress was shifted from the textual prologue to the contextual narration. The name of the play or its author became irrelevant. The trend was towards uniformity. The prologue we have now for the Bhasa - plays are not the original ones by the poet. For example we know that the *Svapnavāsavadatta* known to Sāgarānandin (13 - A. D.) had a longer introduction,³³ perhaps giving the details of the author as in other sanskrit plays.

Secondly, the *cākyārs* effected a kind of 'Pruning' to the original texts to suit their purpose and in that process left out some verses and incidents from the original. Scholars like K. R. Piṣāroṭi and m m Kuppaswami Sastri noted this

phenomenon in Bhasa plays. The former went to the extent of renaming Bhāsanāṭakacakra as Cākyārnāṭakacakra to indicate the differences from the original. 34

Temple Theatres

II3-viii Kulaśekhara had no temple - theatre. Now theatre begins to move to the temples.

A survey of the existing kūttampalams corroborates the history traced so far. Till the 13th century, there were practically no theatre attached to the temples, many were constructed between 14th and 18th centuries. This coincides with the compilation of two works on architecture - Tantrasamuccaya (15th c.) and Śilparatna (16th c.)

Kulaśekhara's capital did not have a temple theatre - but preserves a 11th century inscription related to drama. Trprayār temple has long association with the performance of Āścarya-cūḍāmaṇi. It was performed directly in front of the main shrine. Avittattūr Śiva temple is very old, it bears an inscription of 12th century. The performance here was in the agraśālā.

Geographically the temple theatres in Kerala fall under two major group concentration-the northern centred around Trissur and the southern around Kottayam. The northern group comprises temples of Perumanam, Iriñjālakkuta, Tirumūzhikulam, Guruvāyūr, Kottiyādi and panniyūr. It is in this area that four of the important cākyār families flourished—Ammannūr, Painkulam, Mariyur and Kuṭṭanchery. This geographical area is also important, since of the 32 Brahmin settlements the five that are still in existence fall within this area—Śukapuram, Perumanam, Iriñjālakkuda, Panniyur, and Triśśivaperūr.

The southern concentration consists of Kottayam, Arpūkkara Kiṭaṅgūr, Haripād, Cengannūr, Ettumānūr, and Tripūnithura. Arppūkkara is the oldest, first constructed in 14th century and repaired in the 16th century. 36

The history of temple theatres will give light to the evolution of sanskrit drama as a temple art.

Drama as a Ritual — 14 A. D. — 18 A. D.

II - 4 The kind of Kūṭiyāṭṭam which we see now emerged during this period, the major developments are grouped under three heads—ritualistic, aesthetic and populist.

Ritualistic

II - 4-i When Kūṭiyāṭṭam came to be confined to Kūttampalam, it became a part of temple ceremonies.³⁷ The actor came to acquire a status equal to that of the priest. Elaborate preparatory rites were prescribed to re-inforce this new position. Kūttampalam is like a yāgaśāla. In the place of sacrificial fire produced through the friction of araṇi, here we have the three wicks of the big lamp lighted from the sanctum sanctorum. The three wicks represent the tretāgni - gārhapatyam, Anvāhāryam and Āhavanīyam. In the place of the avabhṛtasnāna at the end of the sacrifice, the actor sprinkles sacred water at the end of the play. The śālādahanam is symbolically done by putting out the light of the three wicks held together.

Aesthetic

II-4-ii Netrabhinaya was the most eloquent means for Kulasekhara. The importance of eyes in expressing sentiments is well recognised. Māni Mādhava Cākyār has enumerated 8 rasadrṣṭi, 8 bhāvadrṣṭi 24 sañcārīṇīdrṣṭi and 24 vyabhicārīṇīdrṣṭi. He prescribed 22 kinds of movement of eyes to the practising cākyārs. Āṅgikābhinaya in this period developed to— Irunnāṭṭam (acting by ocular gestures sitting on a stool) Patiñjāṭṭam (standing on samapāda) and Iḷakiyāṭṭam (with movements). These modes of representations are skilfully employed while describing garden, forest, Kailāsoddhāraṇam etc.. Sātvikābhinaya also accomplished perfection. Arjuna praveśa (Subhadrādhanañjayam) Rāvaṇapraveśa (Aśokavani-kāṅkam and Bālivadha (Abhiṣekam) are some of the examples. Cākyārs have specialised in the presentation of selected verses like Śikhiniśalabha and Calakuvalaya.

Populist

II-4-iii The role of Vidūṣaka was blown out beyond all proportions. Almost all that is attributed to him—Malayalam translation parodies, additional stories/ślokas, and puruṣārtha are meant to placate the nānājana.

INNOVATIONS DURING 14 AD — 18 AD

Ritualistic	Aesthetic	Populist
Kūttampalam	Irunnāṭṭam	Nambiar - Tamil
Pūrvaraṅga	Patiñjāṭṭam	Paribhāṣa
Akkitta	Iḷakiyāṭṭam	Pratiśloka
Araññutaḷi		Puruṣārtha
Āḷāma		Samkṣepa
Muṭiyakkitta		Anukrama
		Nirvahaṇa
		Additional stories/verses.

Of these, developments of the second category - aesthetic, alone is on the lines initiated by Kulaśekhara. The other two were imposed on the theatre by compelling circumstances.

II-4-iv These innovations effected a drastic change in the basic structure of our theatre. We saw how did Kulaśekhara presented the I Act of Tapatīsamvaraṇa. Let us see how the Cākyār does it in Kūṭiyāṭṭam.

TAPATĪSAMVARAṆAM KŪṬIYĀṬṬAM 38**First Day**

Nāndī — Pūrvaraṅga — Araññutaḷiśloka
Vidūṣaka enters — Pūrvasambandha

Second Day

Vidūṣaka narrates vātutīrkal. There is a feud between the two villagers of Mezhkāntala and Kīzkāntala. The settlement of the quarrel. Several anecdotes and verses are added in course of the explanation. Vidūṣaka is the only character on the stage, he imitates the whole crowd of the assembly.

Third day

Puruṣārthavarṇanam of Vidūṣaka - Vinodam and Vañcanam. The first puruṣārtha is vinodam - enjoyment. The dwellers of Anadhīti-maṅgalam - village of the illiterates, discuss means to satisfy their sensual passion. The names of so many women are suggested, this gives an opportunity to abuse the immoral practices current in the society.

The second puruṣārtha is vañcanam - deception. A fool amongst the villagers is made the thief.

Fourth Day

The third puruṣārtha is aśanam - eating - A great feast is described in all its details. The vidūṣaka turns to be an ideal glutton.

Fifth Day

Rājaseva is the fourth Puruṣārtha. The villagers discuss as to who is the best king under whom they can take service. The weakness of the whole machinery of administration is well portrayed. At last the vidūṣaka comes to the conclusion that King Samvaraṇa is the best king. He starts in search of him.

Sixth Day

King Samvaraṇa enters — Pūrvasambandha

Presents this sloka प्रियतनयवियोगे.....

description of morning, vidusaka meets the king; enquires the reason for his grief.

Seventh Day

King narrates the dream Explains the śloka आरात् दृष्टम्
Vidūṣaka interprets the dream to mean that the king should marry again.

Eighth Day (Last day)

King and jester start to meet the queen. Throbbing of his eyes, suggesting union. They reach the garden. King sees the foot print. Nayanaprīti - enjoyment to the eyes. Here ends the kūṭiyāṭṭam

The practice of presenting the entire drama disappears. Actually the last three days alone have relevance to the drama. The first five days vidusaka is alone on the stage and what he narrates is extraneous to the theme of the play.

New manuals came to be written for the dramas used on the stage³⁶. It was called Kriyāvidhi. Later it was expanded as Āṭṭaparakāram and Kramadīpika. The emergence of these works gave rise to a separate branch — the Kūṭiyāṭṭam literature.

Period of Decline (19 AD — 20 AD)

II-5-i. 17th century witnessed the flowering of three theatrical forms — Kathakali, Kriṣṇāṭṭam and Tullal. The first two adopted many things from kūṭiyāṭṭam. Popularity of these art forms had an adverse effect on kūṭiyāṭṭam. The dawn of the present century witnessed the break-down of the social structure which was the back-bone of kūṭiyāṭṭam. Naturally this had its reflection on the art. Kathakali could survive, though after much struggle. Kūṭiyāṭṭam, compared to Kathakali had two limitations - it was confined to a particular community as its kuladharma. In the changed social order, cākyārs could not hold up the line of succession. On the eve of his life Māṇi Mādhava cākyār in his introduction to Nāṭyakalpadruma lamented that he could not create a worthy successor to inherit his histrionic talents.

Second limitation was its close proximity to temples which stood in the way of a larger audience from appreciating it. Efforts were made to supplement these handicaps. Yet, being late in the starting point Kutiyattam failed to pick up along with Kathakali in its race for survival.

II-5-ii The remarkable development during the period was its performance outside the temple premises. The credit goes to painkulam Rāma Cākyār who did it in 1940. This gave a new lease of birth to the declining popularity of the temple art. Now, Kūṭiyāṭṭam is presented on several national and international stages, which has brought global recognition to this art. The Kerala Kalamandalam Cherutharuthy founded by Vallathol, the Ammannur Gurukulam, Irinjilakuda, guided by Madhava

Cākyār and the mar gī at Tiruvananthapuram headed by Sri. D. Appukuttan Nair, do valuable service for the preservation and popularisation of Kutiyattam.

II-5-iii The history of classical sanskrit theatre, traced so far can be shown as below,

Age	technic	Inner Meaning	Medium	Language
Early beginning				
2 BC – 9 AD	विष्कम्भः	समाधिः	सामान्याभिनयः	संस्कृतम्
Formative period				
10 AD – 11 AD	पूर्वसम्बन्धः	भावः	अन्तरभिनयः	संस्कृतम्
Period of transi- tion 12AD – 13AD	सूचनासूत्रधारः	वस्तु	मुद्रा	मार्दङ्गिक.. तमिल्
Ritualistic				
14 AD – 18 AD	निर्वहणम्	akaporu!	अभिनयः	मणिप्रवालम्
Period of decline				
19 AD – 20 AD	निर्वहणम्	akaporu!	अभिनयः	मलयालम्

Having traced the history so far, a few points require further investigation.

Role of Kulaśekhara

III Tradition 41 attributes all that we see today in Kūṭiyāttam –Pūrvaraṅga, Vernacular & Vidūṣaka - to the innovative genius of Kulaśekhara, though the transformation of nāṭaka to āṭṭam and further to kūttu was a long drawn evolutionary process prompted by various socio - religio - economic factors.

III - i Kulaśekhara presents his play straight to his audience without Nāndi or Prastāvana. Hence elaboration of pūrvaraṅga cannot be attributed to him.

III - ii Available literature does not provide any clue to prove his association with the introduction of vernacular or the new role of Vidūṣaka. On the contrary, it presents him as one

endowed with a high order of sensibility. First and last, he was a dramatist who unlike many of his predecessors took a serious note of the stage. He wrote for the most enlightened genre of spectators. To satisfy their pursuit, he expanded the text, confined the expression to the most subtle way, rarely did he allow even hand gestures. It seems that he drew the parallel from state administration where in the king has an inner circle of cabinet ministers to discuss the secrets; similarly he developed in the theatre an inner circle of confidants-Prekṣaka. We cannot believe that a disciplined artist of his calibre will permit the parodies and vernaculars on the stage.

III-iii The criticism of Naṭāṅkuśa for introducing vernacular is directed against the Cākyār; the author has only reverence to Kulaśekhara.

III-iv The association of Tola in this affair is also doubtful. He was advisor to the King on literary affairs - Kāvyaśāstra. Like the king, he too was a poet and critic of high order. He turned his guns to the quacks for misuse of yamaka, construction with dūrānvaya, and inclusion of words for pādapūraṇa. He did not spare even his benefactor. In his own characteristic way, he pointed out the imitations from Kalidasa. His mahākāvya, judged from the two available verses, attests the perfection of his genius.

He was fond of fun, but we will be making fun of his genius if we attribute all the additions caused by the śākhā-camkramaṇa and 'maukharyāviṣkaraṇakautuka' of the cākyārs to him. They are of indogenous origin. Lesser poets scribbled and the cākyār compiled; the process continued until recently.

As pointed out by Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja, perhaps, the word Tolan does not stand for one individual, instead it denotes the vidūṣaka in general. It can be a variant of 'tozhan' the term by which vidūṣaka is addressed in Malayalam.

IV Meaning of the Word Dhvani

The acting manuals of Kulasekhara prepared by the Brahmin scholar, is known as Dhvani—Dhanañjayadhvani and Samvaraṇadhvani, together

they are called Vyāṅgyavyākhyā. Ānandavardhana borrowed the term Dhvani from Vyākaraṇasāstra and gave it a new meaning to build up his theory in the kāvyasaraṇi, 42 similarly Kulaśekhara took the word from Dhvanikāra and developed his notion on nāṭyasaraṇi.

In his terminology dhvani, siddhānta, bhāva and sthāyi are synonymns. 43 Always it denotes the meaning not expressed by external means, but conveyed through internal gestures.

In Bharata abhinaya of the actor conveys the sentiment to the spectator. In the absence of such a conveyer - belt in śravya, the theory of rasa for a long time, was confined to visuals. Ānandavardhana provided this medium, dhvani. The attempt of Kulaśekhara is to link these two parrallel streams.

The basic difference of the two postulates is this — to Anandavardhana dhvani is the means, to Kulaśekhara it is the end, means he already had - abhinaya. The relation can be illustrated like this—

	व्यापारः	अर्थः	अधिकारी
श्रव्यसरणिः	अभिधा	वाच्य	नानालोकः
	व्यञ्जना	व्यङ्ग्यः	काव्यार्थतत्त्वज्ञः
दृश्यसरणिः	सामान्याभिनयः	इतिवृत्तम्	नानालोकः
	अन्तरभिनयः	अवस्था	प्रेक्षकः

The avasthā is dhvani. What Kulaśekhara wanted was to evolve a method for the presentation of dhvani — ध्वनेः प्रयोगमार्गः ।

The term Vyāṅgyavyākhyā attributed to it is unable to carry the full significance of Kulasekhara's vision mainly because it is not a commentary of the suggested meaning but the means for its presentation. The dhvani manual should have been called ध्वनिप्रयोगमार्गः । Kulaśekhara did not call it Vyāṅgyavyākhyā.

IV - ii As the medium of Anandavardhana was language, the suggested sense had the constrain to operate only in its relation to the

primary meaning. The dramatist was free from this limitation. He worked on a different medium. Hence he could embrace all that was brought out by śleṣa, samāśukti and anyāpadeśa with in the wider ambit of dhvani.

In the opening scene of Taptīsamvaraṇa, dhvani to Vidūṣaka is king's aversion to the queen. To the king it is patnī-vir āgagopanecchā. This continues till they see the foot-prints. From there till the union in the third act dhvani continued. The difference is that now the two need not conceal each other. Their feelings are complimentary. Again in the sixth when Tapatī appears in disguise there is dhvani. Thus gopanecchā till foot-prints, nayanaprīti till union and a slight confusion in the VIth act are the dhvanis in the drama to be expressed through eyes. The rest are to be communicated through sāmānyābhinaya

The prayogamārga for dhvani is therefore complete. Flow of Tapatī etc. come under the purview of ordinary presentation. To Kulasekhara, the flying Nambiar or the floating Naṅgyār do not come under his scheme of dhvani. 44

One thing that we have to note here in particular is that Kulasekhara permitted a deviation from the original only when he had to convey something different from the expressed, on all other occasions he stuck to the script. His dhvani - text, therefore, is not a manual of kūṭiyattam, nor the prescriptions for the presentation of sanskrit plays; it is only a method for exposition of the meaning hidden in the words of the dramatist. Hidden meaning to Kulasekhara was the inner-feelings of the character, not mutually communicated on the stage.

Two Traditions of Nāṭaka and Kūttu

While submitting itself for transformation, the sanskrit drama surrendered most of its characteristics. No longer was it enacted in full. The text and author became irrelevant. Worst still was the distortion to the theme in the hands of cākyārs. The humorous piece Matta-vilāsa turned to be an offering before the diety to beget a child; Bhagavadajjuka which provided many lighter moments to the audience.

come to be loaded with philosophy. It seems that reference to Buddhistic tenets annoyed the priestly class.

The commentators of Sanskrit dramas do not refer to Kūṭiyāṭṭam. Even Śivarāma who respectfully refers to the author of the dhvani-manuals, did not think it worth to incorporate the 'dhvani' in his commentaries. We do not know whether there still remained an independent tradition of presenting Sanskrit plays. Any how many of the successors of Prekṣakas ignored the aberrations of the cākyār, others kept a subdued smile. The author of Śākuntalacarccā (14 A. D) refers once or twice to Kūṭiyāṭṭam. The tone is not appreciative.

By the time of 16th century, the Cākyār had exceeded all limits that the author of Naṭāṅkuśa thought that they will go mad unless checked in time. Like a mahot, he took the goad in his hands.

His criticism is directed against the innovations brought under the two heads - ritualistic and populist. The vulgar stories, verses, parodies, Pūrvaraṅga — all came in for sharp criticism. He is quite sarcastic while comparing the cākyars to monkies - both are proficient in Śākhācamkramaṇa. Rāmapāṇivāda of the 18th century AD is not happy with the pāṭhaka artists.

While appreciating this criticism of the scholars of prekṣaka tradition we must also acknowledge the contribution of cākyars in preserving this art Sanskrit stage which mainly depended on the highly stylised form of acting accomplished by classical medium, for the first time got connected to the 'little traditions' by these innovations. It is perhaps the secret of its survival.

Akapporu!

VI Inner meaning is akapporu!, outer being Purapporu!. The akapporu! as we have it now might have passed through four stages in its development.

- i) The inner meaning referred to in Vyaṅgyavyākhyā where in a subtle bhavā is suggested through netrabhinaya along with the plain meaning is the embryo. Nature is described, but there is areference to the queen.

- ii Vācikābhinaya gives the outer meaning while āṅgika denotes inner - meaning by mudras. eg. Mantrāṅka.
- iii Both meanings are fully developed, the inner meaning is being separated. In Bhagavadajjuka the disciple describes his early life — his childhood in a poor family, association with Buddhists for livelihood and lastly the studentship of guru. This is the bāhyārtha. The ābhyantara is that, of all the ways of life the one shown by vedanta is the best. Elucidation of all the systems of philosophy is made possible here.
- iv A symbolic interpretation as in the Dīnmātradarśinī commentary of Bhagavadajjuka where the heroine is represented as suṣumna, the mother avidyā etc..., This is not a prayogamārga, but only a scholastic exercise influenced by works like Prabodhacandrodaya and later tantric tradition.

VI - 2 The inner meaning in its origin was only a bhāva, then a dramatic device; but later it was developed into a full-fledged phenomenon even relegating the primary meaning to the background. The most interesting thing is that there was an adhikāribheda. In the first two stages inner meaning was intended for the Prākṣaka, but in the later stage nānāloka became the target. Content was also changed. This has to be explained in the light of the social conditions that influenced the Kerala stage.

Vidūṣaka

VII - 1 The vidūṣaka is an important character in sanskrit plays providing comic relief to the audience. The kings had able ministers like Yaugandharyāṇa to help him in matters of administration. They are karmasacivas. He had also narmasaciva to aid him in love affairs. By birth, he is a Brahmin innocent, at the same time ignorant of the scholastic tradition attached to that group. His interest centres mainly on the harem and the sweet dishes in the kitchen. He had the freedom with the king and also with the queen and could take such liberties that the ministers could not even dream of. In Swapnavāsavadatta he is a chatter-box; mukhara.

His gluttony is some what proverbial. But in Mālavikāgni-mitra, he is very shrewd and plays a vital role in accomplishing the king's union with his love.

Vidūṣaka is characteristic of Sanskrit dramas. In all the dramas, except in the Rāmāyana Plays, poets have made good use of the folly and resourcefulness of this innocent Brahmin.

VII - 2 The vidūṣaka of Sanskrit appears in kūṭiyāṭṭam in a more developed form. His functions are : —

- i When the king describes his love vidūṣaka supplements it with a parody.
- ii Dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa are the four puruṣārthas. Vidūṣaka has his own parallels - vinodam, vañcanam, aśanam and rājaseva.
- iii The vidūṣaka can criticise, ridicule or laugh at any person including the king. His utterances have immunity from royal wrath. Cākyārs exploited this immunity provided by the society to the maximum to bring out the malpractices of those who are high - placed. In a society, where there was no fourth estate, the function of it was carried out by vidūṣaka. The liberty taken by vidūṣaka helped Kūṭiyāṭṭam in keeping touch with contemporaneity.

VII - 3 The vidūṣaka represents, three stages in the development of kūṭiyāṭṭam as also of Kerala History⁴⁵. Vasantaka of Mantrāṅkam represents, the first stage ie. transition (12-14) He is a minister of King Udayana, very shrewd and good in administration. He has equal respect to the Brahmins and the Buddhists.

The second stage is that of enmity to Buddhism, Śāṇḍilya of Bhagavadajjuka is a representative of this period. It forms the first two centuries of the ritualistic age.

In the last stage, the vidūṣaka is degenerated beyond description. His puruṣārtha narration is near to vulgarity when

he explains the *veśyāvinoda*. Brahmins are ridiculed. The degeneration of the society is at its worst. *Naṭāṅkuśa* severally criticises this practice of *Brāhmaṇanindā*.

- VII-4 The *vidūṣaka* of *kūṭiyāṭṭam*, what ever be his drawbacks, had a historic function —

‘Had the *cākyārs* merely restricted themselves to the frame which was given to them by *Kulaśekhara*, there was every chance of break down and annihilation of the tradition. The *kūṭiyāṭṭam* traditions today are not museum pieces of a distant past, but belong to the contemporary Indian through their satire, social comment and concern with here and now. *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* then is a key to the understanding of the Indian cultural phenomenon where a piece of contemporary theatre embodies many moments of the past and is an amalgam of many traditions, some *śāśvata* and universally Indian, others totally local or regional and contemporary.’⁴⁶

References

- 1 *Nāṭyakalpadrumam* — *Māṇi Mādhava Cākyār*
- 2 *Kramadīpikā* and *āṭṭaprakāram*. Manuals of *Cūḍāmaṇi* and *Mantranka* are published.
- 3 *Kūṭiyāṭṭam...its form and performance*, Dr. V. Raghavan, *Sanskrita Ranga Annual* — V 1964 - 65.
- 4 ‘ശൃംഗാരാദിരസങ്ങളെട്ടു,ഭീനനും നാലൊക്കെപ്പിഞ്ഞാമ്പനും ഭാവാവൃത്തികളും പ്രവൃത്തിയുമിവം നന്നാലു, സ്വപ്നസ്വപനം രണ്ടേ ധർമ്മി,യിരണ്ടു സിദ്ധ്ധികൾ, തഥാ ഗാനങ്ങൾപഞ്ചൈവ, നാലാഭുതാഭുതങ്ങളാണു,മുൻറിതിനെ നാം കൂത്തൊരു കൈകൊണ്ടിതു’.
— quoted by D. Appukuttan Nair, *Intr. to Nāṭyakalpadrama*.
Kūṭiyāṭṭam here is described in its relation to *Nāṭyaśāstra*.
- 5 *Cochin State Manual* Page 199.
Cākyār is said to be a corrupt form of *ślaghyagiri*, men of respectability. According to tradition, a particular *sūta* family came over to Kerala with the *perumal* as the court actors. When

this family was about to become extinct, it was allowed to adopt into it the children of Brahmin women born of criminal intimacy. After its discovery and expulsion from their caste these children if invested with sacred thread become cākyārs, if not nampyārs. The girls join either caste indifferently.”

6 Kūttum Kūṭiyāṭṭavum — P. 4 — 11 Ammaman Tampuran, Mathrubhumi Publications — 1989

7 माधुर्यमक्षरव्यक्तिः पदव्यक्तिश्च सुस्वरः ।

स्थैर्यं लघुतमत्वं च षडेते वचसो गुणाः ॥

Ibid - P - 7

8 This refers to the close relation the Buddhists had with theatre. According to tradition, one Śākyamuni reformed the drama. Buddhists developed drama to propagate their religion. Aśvaghoṣa is believed to have written two dramas - Śārīputraprakaraṇa and Rāṣṭrapālānāṭaka. The chinese traveller Fa-hi-en have recorded that in the Buddhist monasteries of Madhura the stories of Buddhist converts were presented through actors.

— Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja — introduction to Nāṭyakalapadrumam.

9 इत्यमवस्थितौ इह दैववशात् एको महान् गुणः सञ्जातो दृश्यते यदभिज्ञान-
शकुन्तलादीनि न व्याकुलीक्रियन्ते ।

— Naṭāukusa

Prof. K. P. Narayana Pisharody had adduced two reasons for the disappearance of Śākuntala from Kerala stage.

i) Once a cākvār while presenting the sloka कृष्णसारे दधचक्षुः acted with the two eyes in opposite directions — one on the king and the other on the deer. The strain involved in this acting caused injury to his eyes. Henceforth cākyārs developed a dislike for Śākunthala.

ii) The Subhadrādhanañjayam took to the stage all that was presentable in Sakuntala. Its popularity made Sakuntala irrelevant. A hint to this is available in a story provided by Ullūr. One day, Tola appeared crying before the king Kulasekhara while he was reading his drama with his friends. When asked he replied that he was the ghost of Sakunthala deeply wounded and disfigured by the king.

10 The whole story of Rāmāyaṇa is condensed in three dramas — Abhiṣeka, Pratimā and Cūḍāmaṇi. They are popularly known

as Rāmāyaṇanāṭaka. The enactment of this, extended over an year, was very much popular on the Kerala stage.

- 11 Production of a play in Kūṭiyāṭṭam — G. Venu, Naṭanakairali Ammannūr Madhom, Irinjalakuda 1989.
- 12 For a detailed study of the inter - relation of different tradition, see Traditional Indian Theatre - Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, National Book Trust, N. Delhi - 1980.
- 13 Nāṭya śāstra in the Tamil soil - Dr. (Kum.) Padma Subrahmanyam, Journal of Music Academy, Madras, Vol. 1981.
- 14 Nāṭya śāstra — XXIII
- 15 अहं हि सम्प्रति सङ्गीतधनः — Sūtradhāra in Mattavilāsa.
- 16 प्रातः शैलाग्ररङ्गे रजनिजवनिकापायमलक्ष्यलक्ष्मी -
विक्षिप्यापूर्वपुष्पाञ्जलिमुडुनिकरं सूत्रधारायमाणः ।
यामेवैवङ्गेष्विवाहनः कृतरुचिषु चतुर्वेव जातप्रतिष्ठा -
मवात् प्रस्तावयन्वो जनदटनमहानटिकां सूर्यसूतः ॥
— Sūryaśataka
- 17 Kuṭṭanīmata — verses 899 - 922
- 18 अपरित्यक्तस्थानकरसकाकुव्यञ्जितस्फुटार्थपदम् ।
अभिराममविश्रान्तं पठितं निरवद्यमखिलभापासु ॥
- 20 Kerala Sahitya Caritram—Ullūr S. Parameswara Iyer Vol. I - P. 147.
- 21 के पुनः प्रेक्षका इति चेत् —
अष्टौ दश च विद्यास्ना नाट्यवेदो यथाविधि ।
स्मरणास्त्रं च यैर्ज्ञातं तान् विदुः प्रेक्षकान् वृन्नाः ॥
- 22 Rasasadanabhāṇa of Godavarman gives a graphic description of the stage and the audience.
मध्ये दीपज्वलनमधुरे पार्श्वतः पाणिधस्त्री -
चित्राभूते सरसहृदयैर्भूसुरैर्भासिताग्रे ।
पृष्ठे मार्दङ्गिकविलसिते रङ्गदेशे प्रविष्टः
स्पष्टाकूतं नटयति नटः कोऽपि कश्चित्प्रबन्धम् ॥

- 23 इत्येवं सर्वं विवेकभाजो दृष्ट्योः प्रेक्षकान् भावेनैव बोधयन् त्रिवर्त्युज्ज्वलितस्य दीपस्य पुरतस्तिष्ठेत् । यावत् प्रेक्षकमुखं मुदा तु विकसति तावत् भावेनैव प्रयोक्त्वा प्रयोक्तव्यः । कथं भावेनैवेति चेत् —

नृत्तस्याङ्गीह भावः स्यादङ्गान्यस्यापि तानि षट्
दीपौज्वल्यं लयैक्यं च भूमिकासौष्ठवं ततः ।

रागप्रयोगनैपुण्यं प्रयोक्त्वाकृतिभद्रता
गात्रिर्जयानि तान्येव प्रयोक्त्वा प्रेक्षकैरपि ।

ऐक्यमङ्गाङ्गिनो कृत्वा भावैस्तु रमयेत् स तम्
अन्यानभिनयेनैमान् नानालोकान् विनोदयेत् ॥

The micro - movement of the eyes through which the actors often express complex emotions are a class by themselves.

इह भावाः रसाश्चैव दृष्टावेव प्रतिष्ठिताः

दृष्टया तु सूचितो भावः पश्चादङ्गैर्विभाव्यते ।

The relation between the two equations, Prayoktr - Prekṣaka and drg - bhāva, is the most significant aspect in Kulasekhara's dramatic theory. Bhāva when used in the instrumental stands for the entire complex mediating between these two circles. In other places it expresses the ordinary meaning of śhāyibhāva.

- 24 लाक्षाविषदग्धाभ्यां हृदि मन्येऽहं पादाब्जवाणाभ्याम् ।

विद्धः शरेण शेते मरुतकमणिरेष कीर्णकरः ॥

Tapatisamvaraṇa Act I śl. 12

- 25 एवं प्रेक्षकप्रयोक्तृसम्बन्धः । अथैवं भावेनैव दृशोर्दर्शयित्वा...

- 26 കണ്ടോമല്ലോ തളിയിലിരുവംകൂത്ത^o നാമന്നൊരിക്കൽ
ദൈവം കെട്ടോളൊരു തപതിയാർ നങ്ങയാരെനെനോക്കി

Unnirnilisandēśa - 94

- 27 1. History of Nambudiri community in Kerala.
M. G. S. Narayanan and Kesavan Veluthattu, AGNI. Vol. II
Frists Staal, Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley.

2. ചരിത്രത്തിന്റെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ

ഇളംകുളം കുഞ്ഞൻപിള്ള, N. B. S. Kottayam.

3. കേരളത്തിന്റെ ഇന്നലെകൾ

കെ. എൻ. ഗണേശ്, സാംസ്കാരികവകുപ്പ്.

- 28 The story of Sankaracarya cursing the Nambutiri community that they will not be entitled to perform vedic rites seems to have been invented to justify their new role in the changed social set up.
- 29 Dūtavākya - Nāṭakam Bhasa - Introduction Ullūr S. Parameswara Iyer - Sahitya academy, Trissur 1967.
- 30 Līlātilakam — Chapter I
- 31 पदमध्ये संस्कृतं मध्ये देशभयादियुक्तं तदेव कार्यम्, दक्षिणायमे मणिप्रवाल-
मिति प्रसिद्धम् । Abh. Bh XXXII . 409
- 32 Dutavakya - Introduction Ulūr.
- 38 यथा स्वप्नवासवदत्ते —
नेयथ्ये सूत्रधारः उत्सारणां श्रुत्वा पठति
अये, कथं तपोवनेष्युत्सारणा ?
(बिलोक्य) कथं मन्त्री यौगन्धरायणो वत्सराजस्य राज्यप्रत्यानयनं कर्तुं कानः
पद्मावतीयजनेनोत्सार्यते ।
Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa, Oxford University Press-1937. P. 51.
- 34 1. Abhinavagupta knew the śloka सञ्चितपद्मकवाद in Swapna-
vasavadatta, perhaps immediately after the dream - scene.
2. Śāradātanaya quotes the śloka पद्मावत्या मुञ्च वीक्ष्य... This might
have been a part of the portrait incident in the last scene
or an entire anecdote drawn from the Kathāsaritsāgara where
in Padmavati adorned with peculiar saffron - mark gives the
king a vague pre - sentiment of Vasavadatta's presence which
might have become the casuality of the cākyārs pruning.
3. Ramacandra and Gunacandra was familiar with the verse
पादाक्रान्ताणि पुष्पाणि the context of which also is known. For
more details — Bhasa a study by A. D. Pusalkar and Plays
ascribed to Bhasa by C. R. Devadhar. All these 'missings'
were the result of the above process. We can explain the
omissions in each case with valid reasons.
- 35 Introduction to Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi - Mr. Kuppuswami Sastri
birth centenary volume P — 168.
- 36 For more details, on the temple theatres of Kerala, see Temple
theatres and Sanskrit tradition in Kerala - Clifford R. Jones ...
Sanskṛta Ranga — Annual VI 1972.

- 37 Kuttampalam is part of the temple complex. People attach a special sanctity to them. Devotees first pay obeisance to it and then only enter the inner circle where the main shrine is situated. All the rituals to be observed in the constructions and consecration of the temple has to be observed for Kuttampalam.
L. S. Rajagopal, Samskrita Ranga Annual VIII - 1987.
- 38 Kuttampalangūlil - K. P. Narayana Pisaroti - N. B. S. Kottayam.
- 39 The script of Sanskrit dramas contains instructions to the director and actor प्रविश्य पटाक्षेपेण, लज्जां नाटयित्वा etc. But an independent treatise containing stage direction of a play first appears for the two dramas of Kulaśekhara. It was a prayogamārga or kriyāvidhī; we had such manuals in Sanskrit for Partīñja and Mattavilāsa.

When drama was transformed into kūttu the presentation of a single act was extended to several days. This necessitated preparation of elaborate manuals to regulate the performance. Senior cākyārs wrote down in local dialect the guidelines — kriyākrama for practising actors.

मन्वाङ्गस्य प्रयोगार्थमुपदेशक्रमागतम् ।

तस्य क्रियाक्रमं वक्ष्ये भाषया प्रथमं त्रितम् ॥

Kriyākrama later developed into kramadipika - production manuals aimed at the director. Acting manuals - āṭṭaparakāra, prescribing modes of presentation intended for the actor marks the final stage in the preparation of these manuals. The cākyārs preserved such manuals for almost all the dramas as a family tradition.

Pāṭhakam is an off-shoot of the Nampyārtamil, the genesis of which we had traced to the transition period. This role became a duplication when vidūṣaka too switched over to vernacular. Consequently Nampyār was confined to plays which did not have a jester. Aṅgulīyāñka alone retains him now. He then developed his art as an independent branch of Pāṭhakam. The attack of Rāmapāñivāda (Pāṭhakakalpa - Ed. Dr. K. Vijayan) is directed against this role of Nampyār.

Following his colleague; the cākyār also took out his role of vidusaka to develop the Prabandhakūttu. —प्रकरणं वध्यते अभिनय-योग्यताधानपूर्वकं निवध्यते इति प्रबन्धः ।

Melputtūr wrote his prabandhas for the use of his cākyār friends. Clearly following the foot-steps of her male counterparts, the naṅgyār brought out the introductory part of the II act of Dhananjaya and developed it as Nangyārkūttu.

The Kūṭiyāṭṭam literature thus embraces a wide range - the Kriyāvidhi and Prabandha in Sanskrit, the stage manuals, texts for Pāṭhakam, compilation of verses, parodies, stories, etc. in Malayalam. The potential of this huge treasure remains to be explored.

40 Ammannūr cāccu Cākyār - K. T. Ramavarma - vallathol Vidya peethom, Śukapuram 1981.

41 1. Kūttum Kūṭiyāṭṭavum — Ammāman Tampuran — P 25 - 28.

2. All the available stage manuals of Sanskrit plays in Kerala are generally attributed to Tolan, but it is obvious that minor changes and innovations have been taking place through out the course of development of the stage in Kerala.

Kūṭiyāṭṭam, an introduction — Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja.

3. Scholars have expressed divergent views regarding the role of the dramatist in the reformation. A majority of scholars are inclined to endorse the traditional view. Some scholars however have expressed a different view which seems more reasonable.....They attribute to the dramatist all innovations except that regarding the function of Vidūṣaka

Sanskrit Dramas of Kulasekhara — Dr. N. P. Unni

42 ध्वनियुक्ताव्यसरिणिः शस्तेति प्रोच्यते ब्रुधैः ।

एतस्मात् ध्वनियुक्ता मा रचिता नाटकद्वयी ॥

— धनञ्जयध्वनिः

43 1. स्वमिद्वान्तं दृशोरेव.....

2. उत्तरश्लोकार्थं प्रेक्षकाभ्यां ताराभ्यामेव बोधयेत् ।

3. प्रेक्षकान् भावेनैव बोधयन्

4. भावेनैव दृशोर्दर्शयित्वा..... ।

5. इमं स्थायिभावं दृशोर्विभावयन् ।

44 Facets of Sanskrit Literature — Dr. K. Vijayan P. 34 - 32

45 Kuttampalangalil — K. P. Narayana Pisaroti, N. B. S. Kottayam.

46 Arts of Keralakshetra — Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Govt. Sanskrit College Tripunithura - 1988.

